

The Russell's Viper shown in the accompanying photograph¹ was killed on 20th September 1948 on the Attikunna Estate, Nilgiris, elevation 3,200 ft. It was measured by W. T. Broadhurst to be 6 ft. and $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch long, and the pole held by one of the men in the photograph was cut to the exact length of the snake. This photograph and the particulars concerning it are given to me by Mr. W. T. Broadhurst of the Jessie Estate, Malabar.

BANGALORE,
2nd June, 1950.

R. W. BURTON,
Lt.-Col. I.A. (Retd.)

19. A DHAMAN OR RAT-SNAKE [*PTYAS MUCOSUS*
(LINN.)] JUMPING

On our way to the Caves on 25th June (Kanheri National Park) we startled a 6 ft. Dhaman which climbed up an adjacent bamboo, and laid itself on a horizontal branch at a height of about 18 ft. from the ground.

The snake was watched in this position for about 10 minutes while it lay motionless. A stone was then flung at it and this resulted in the snake jumping from its position on to the ground where it landed with a heavy thud and disappeared into a bush.

114, APOLLO STREET,
BOMBAY,
20th July, 1950.

V. K. CHARI,
Asst. Curator

[This is interesting and, if a common habit, may possibly provide the core of the frequent stories one hears in India about 'flying' snakes.—EDS.]

20. THE RECORD HAMADRYAD OR KING COBRA [*NAJA*
HANNAH (CANTOR)] AND LENGTHS & WEIGHTS
OF LARGE SPECIMENS

In his authoritative article on the Hamadryad in the *Society's Journal*, (Vol. xxx. pp. 189-195) Colonel F. Wall gave the length of the largest authentic specimen known to him as 15 ft. 5 inches.

In his contribution 'Early Days in Malaya', (Vol. 38, p. 257) the late Mr. H. E. Burgess mentioned a specimen 16 ft. 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches long.

A letter published in *The Field* of 23rd October 1948 Mr. C. A. Gibson-Hill of the Raffles Museum, Singapore, records a specimen taken alive near Fort Dickson, Negri Sembilan, which was kept in captivity for some time by Mr. J. Leonard of Ruthken Estate and later sent to the London Zoo, where it died. It measured at death 18 ft. 2 inches.

¹ The photo is not clear enough for reproduction. Eds.

A recent enquiry to Singapore found Mr. Gibson-Hill away on leave, but a letter from the Museum Director informs me that the Aagaard's Nakon Sritamarat Mountains (Peninsular Siam) specimen of 18 ft. 4 inches, which is quoted by Malcolm Smith (Fauna of British India, Serpentes, 1943, p. 438.) may be accepted as the world's record for the Hamadryad.

The Director's letter mentions that quite recently a big hamadryad was killed on Singapore Island and brought to the Museum. It was 15 ft. 7 inches long and weighted 26½ lbs. It was very stout, so contrasts remarkably with Ditmar's ('Snakes of the World') record of 16 lbs. for a specimen of 15 ft., which, however, had been in captivity. That would account for the contrast in weight. A plaster mould has been made of this recent Singapore specimen.

BANGALORE,
1st August, 1950.

R. W. BURTON,
Lt.-Col. I.A. (Retd.)

21. BREEDING OF THE GOURAMI [*OSPHRONEMUS GORAMY* (LACEPEDE)] IN INDIAN RIVERS¹

The Gourami is considered to be one of the best freshwater table-fish in the world. It is extensively cultured in Java and the other islands in the Malay Archipelago, from where it has been taken to Europe, Australia, Philippines and Ceylon. It was first imported to Madras from Mauritius in 1866 by Dr. Francis Day, and cultivated in the Government House ponds at Guindy and Madras and also stocked in the waters in and around Madras City. But as most of the stock was depleted by 1915, a fresh consignment was brought from Java by Mr. H. C. Wilson in 1916. The fish is now largely cultivated in the Government fish farms; and breeders and young ones are being distributed to pond-owners in the province. The fish has also been supplied to other States like Baroda, Bengal, Cochin, Hyderabad, Mysore, Punjab, Rajputana and Travancore, where it is reported to be thriving well.

The bionomics and cultural value of Gourami under Indian conditions has been observed by several workers like Raj⁹,¹⁰, Jones⁵, Kulkarni⁷,⁸, Amirthalingam¹, Bhimachar *et al*², Spurgeon¹²,¹³ and Chacko and Venkatraman³. Attempts made by the Madras Fisheries Department since 2nd April 1940 by stocking 106 fingerlings in the Mettur Reservoir have succeeded in acclimatising the fish in the Cauvery river system. The fish is now fairly common in the thirty mile stretch of the river between Mettur and Bhavani, breeding in selected pools having macrophytic vegetation. It is also often captured and sold in markets by the local fishermen. Though Gourami inhabits the rivers of other inter-tropical countries, as reported by Willey¹⁵, Weber and Beaufort¹⁴, Jordan⁶, Herre and Myers⁴ and Smith¹⁷, this is the first instance of successful establishment of the

¹ Communicated with the kind permission of the Director of Fisheries, Madras.